nected to a radial tubular element **8**. Housing **110** also has a connection borehole **114** axially offset from borehole **111**. Valve **126** at the top in the drawing corresponds in mirror image to bottom valve **26**, of which the corresponding parts in valves **26** and **126** differ by the number **100**. As shown in FIG. **2**, seven identical housing parts **2**–**2***f*, are arranged around both valves **26** and **126**. Each housing **2**–**2***f* is connected with valve housing **10** and, through the seven tubular elements **8** and boreholes **111**, with valve housing **110**. Each of the housing parts **2***a*–**2***f* carries a filter element **1***a*–**1***f* corresponding to filter element **1**, the other elements not being shown.

The medium to be filtered (liquid or gas) passes in the direction of the arrow A through tubular element **15** into valve housing **10** and flows through holes **11***a*–**11***f* into filter housings **2***a*–**2***f*. The medium flows through at least six of the seven filter elements **1**–**1***f* arranged in these housing parts from the outside to the inside. The filtered medium then passes through tubular elements **8** mounted at the top of housing parts **2***a*–**2***f* and through boreholes **111** in valve housing **110** and flows out through hole **114** and tubular element **115** in the direction of the arrow B. The medium to be filtered therefore flows through all filter elements of the device with the exception of filter element **1** when the rotary valve is positioned as shown in the drawing. This filter element is flushed out when rotary valves **116** and **16** are in the positions shown, and a flushing medium (liquid or gas) flows in the direction of arrow C through tubular element **124**, through rotary valve **116** of valve **126**, through tubular element **8** into housing part **2** and through filter element **1** from the inside outward, i.e. in the opposite direction from the flow of the medium to be filtered. Dirt particles are thus removed from filter element **1**, carried through tubular element **9**, through rotary valve **16** in valve **26** and through tubular element **24** in the direction of arrow D. If it is desired that rotary valves **16** and **116** be in the same position, they are connected tightly with each other. With stepped rotation of rotary valves **16**, **116** for the connection to, e.g., another housing part **2***a*, filter element **1***a* found therein can be flushed out, whereas filter element **1** which was flushed out beforehand is then in the flow of the medium to be filtered. In this manner, all of the filter elements **1** can be successively and sequentially flushed out in each of the housing parts **2***a* to **2***f* while other elements are in a filtering mode. If none of the filter elements **1** are being flushed out, then both rotary valves **16** and **116** are placed in positions 180° offset from that in FIG. **2**, wherein holes **25** and **125** are closed by the inner surface of valve housing **10** and **110**, respectively.

The filter elements can be flushed out either in a certain time frame or after a certain pressure in one of the housing parts **2** to **2***f* has been reached because of dirt accumulation.

The loss of medium to be filtered is minimized if the two rotary valves **16** and **116** are rotated in proper timing relationship to each other. Thus borehole **111** is first connected in valve housing **110** with rotary valve **116**. Then the medium remaining in filter housing **1** is pushed back into valve housing **26** by means of a gas fed in the direction of arrow C. Finally, borehole **11** in valve housing **10** is also connected with rotary valve **16**, as shown in the drawing. Filter element **1** is finally flushed out with a flushing agent flowing in the direction of arrows C, D.

If the filters are to be flushed out using the fluid medium being filtered, then rotary slide valve **116** of valve **126** can be dispensed with. In the absence of rotary slide valve **116**, the medium filtered by the pressure arising in valve housing **110** is fed through tubular element **8** to the inside of filter element **1** and flows through this from the inside to the outside, so that dirt particles accumulated on the filter element are separated out. The medium carrying the direct particles is then, as shown in FIG. **1**, carried by rotary slide valve **16** into valve housing **26** in the direction of arrow D.

As a result of the inside excess pressure, no dirt reaches the inside of the device described above. The service is simple. The sole movable part which is used for closing, rotary slide valve **16** and/or **116**, can be replaced by opening valve housing **10** and/or **110** in a simple manner.

In case orifice **19**, **119** should not fit sufficiently tightly against housing **10**, **110**, a closure valve operable as desired can be series-connected with tubular element **24**.

The invention can also be used with an adsorber, wherein the adsorber elements can be flushed out by a reactor in which a second medium is added to a first medium with a device for sedimentation for the outflow of the sediment through the rotary slide valve, with a whirlpool bed for the immediate loosening up of dirt layers and the like.

While one advantageous embodiment has been chosen to iillustrate the invention it will be understood by those skilled in the art that various changes and modifications can be made therein without departing from the scope of the invention as defined in the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. An apparatus for controlling the flow of at least one fluid through a flowthrough element such as a filter comprising

a first hollow housing having a circularly cylindrical interior, an inlet opening for delivering fluid thereto and a plurality of outlet openings lying in substantially the same plane perpendicular to the axis of said cylindrical interior, said inlet opening being axially offset from said plane; means for supplying fluid under pressure to said inlet opening of said first housing;

a plurality of second hollow housings, each capable of receiving a flowthrough element,

each of said second housings having a conduit connected to receive fluid from one of said outlet openings of said first housing, and having an outlet opening;

a rotary valve in said first housing having

a discharge opening,

an axially extending member at least a portion of which is hollow and communicates with said discharge opening, said axially extending member being rotatably mounted in said first housing,

a radially extending tubular member communicating with said hollow portion of said axially extending member, the axis of said radially extending member lying in the plane containing said outlet openings, and

a valve element selectively connectable to any one of said plurality of outlet openings, said valve element comprising a mouthpiece on said radially extending member for coupling to a selected outlet opening and spring means urging said mouthpiece toward the interior wall of said first housing; and